

Water-Demand Study Meeting for Cass, Mason, Menard, and Sangamon Counties

The following is a synopsis of the water supply planning meeting held on August 22, 2007 in Havana, Illinois targeting Cass, Mason, Menard, and Sangamon counties.

Meeting Location: Havana, Illinois

Meeting Date: August 22, 2007

Targeted Areas: Cass, Mason, Menard, and Sangamon Counties

Main Concerns:

1. Water availability
2. Water quality
3. Economic impacts
4. Water conservation
5. Future regulations

Meeting Attendees

Group Represented	Number of Attendees
Public	44
East Central Illinois Regional Water Supply Planning Committee	2
Mahomet Aquifer Consortium Board	3
Illinois State Water Survey	2
Illinois State Geological Survey	1
Wittman Hydro Planning Associates (Water-Demand Study Team)	2
Total	54

Meeting Summary

Susan Licher of Wittman Hydro Planning Associates, Inc. (WHPA) gave a presentation on the scope and time line for the water supply planning project. This project involves a fifteen county region in East Central Illinois and was initiated in response to Governor Blagojevich's Executive Order 2006-1. Susan Licher's presentation focused on the background of the water supply planning initiative, the methods associated with assessing water-demand, and the historical data being used in the water-demand study.

After the presentation, the attendees were asked to state with whom they were affiliated and what specific concerns or comments they had regarding the study. The following paragraphs are a general synopsis of the stakeholders concerns.

Steve Waterworth of the Central Illinois Economic Development Corporation had a concern about how this study might influence the growth within the state of Illinois. If citizens and corporations in less water-rich areas have a report saying that water resources in East Central Illinois are abundant, they might move here in order to feel secure about the water supply. This influx may have a negative

impact on the water supply.

Susan Licher responded by saying that the possible increase in demand by commercial and industrial uses will be part of the supply and demand study. The studies will look at where commercial and industrial activities may locate and determine where there might be conflict due to water availability.

Dr. Derek Winstanley of the Illinois State Water Survey followed this comment by saying that without reasonable planning there is conflict and that one objective of this study is to reduce conflict.

Wendy Martin from the Mason County Democrat said she wanted to know how the two separate studies - supply and demand - would complement one another and how we would avoid inconsistencies between the studies

Susan Licher responded by saying that the water demand study results will be given to the State Water Survey and they will be incorporating the demand results into the supply modeling.

Richard Nichols, the executive director of the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District, is interested in what the study will accomplish. Specifically, he was interested in how conservation would be utilized. He also stated that the Soil and Water Conservation Districts can help with groundwater recharge and conservation initiatives. Richard also talked about how climate change could impact water availability in the area. Industries could also come in and have substantial water uptake and impact water availability.

Cecil Gilson, a retired citizen concerned about water, remarked that municipalities want to tap into the aquifer. He asked if this was being considered in this study and asked if there would be large withdrawals as a result of this.

Susan Licher responded by saying that part of the future scenarios will look at the cumulative effects of all water users on the resource. Currently water is being withdrawn without looking at how water demands impact other users. This study will look at ways each of the users impact the water. One person's actions affect others and we must consider the cumulative impacts on all users and areas.

Aleda Riviere, a citizen from Forest City said that she applauds Richard Nichols for his comment regarding water conservation. Mason County has laws against gray water recycling and she wants to see this study used to save the water resources.

In response to Aleda Riviere's comment, Susan Licher stated that water conservation is important for the future and it is important to talk to committee members and voice your opinion. The Regional Water Supply Planning Committee is the public's voice and are the ones who will make the final recommendations regarding planning and management of the resource.

Andy Wiesenhofer, of Reynolds Well Drilling and member the Board of Directors of the Illinois Association of Groundwater Professionals, said that he came because he is information gathering. He is concerned about groundwater because he has been in the water business for thirty years. He also wants to see what the government is planning in regards to the water sources in Illinois.

A gentleman asked how the 12 member Regional Water Supply Planning Committee (RWSPC) obtained their positions on the committee.

Susan Licher said that it was formed by the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium. Invitations were sent out to people to invite them to sit on the board and be a part of the planning effort.

A gentleman asked if the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee was a closed board.

Morris Bell, a member of the RWSPC from Mason County, said that it is not a closed board and that meetings are held once a month and those meetings are open to the public. The committee has a responsibility after the studies are over to make recommendations for water management and planning.

A gentleman from St. Paul's Lutheran Church said that he was there to gather information. He is interested in private water use and particularly interested on what impact commercial and industrial users will have on private use.

Susan Licher stated that the study is regional in its focus, so it will not cover specific wells. In general, however, activities that affect the aquifer and areas of potential conflict will be considered. Susan Licher asked Dr. Derek Winstanley how he would deal with changes in heads on the supply side.

Dr. Derek Winstanley stated that the Water Survey will deal with head changes but not on a well-by-well basis.

A gentleman asked, "So there are no plans to put meters on every well?"

Dr. Derek Winstanley replied that the Survey would incorporate the water demand results into the supply models and see how water demands would change water levels on a regional basis but not on a well-by-well basis.

A gentleman asked Dr. Derek Winstanley where he could find the results of the completed studies.

Dr. Derek Winstanley said that the results from both studies will be published and available to the public. He then reiterated that people are welcome to come to the meetings being held over the course of the studies and obtain updated information as the studies continue.

A gentleman asked if the meeting details will be posted on the website and Dr. Derek Winstanley said that they would be available on the websites provided at the end of the presentation.

A gentleman asked how the RWSPC was selected and Dr. Derek. Winstanley said that the meeting to select the board members was put in local newspapers eight to nine months ago. About one hundred people turned up and those present made their own nominations for who they wanted as representatives. It was a self-selected process and not a state-led process. He said that they have looked at other states in determining how to run this process. Texas has been involved in water supply planning process for fifty years. In 1985, they decided that their previous top-down, government led approach did not work and finally started a bottom-up approach. For this reason, Illinois is implementing a bottom-up approach and developing recommendations through a grassroots effort.

Joan Esarey, a Havana citizen, said that she wondered if projections for supply included water quality parameters or water quality changes. She mentioned a concern about arsenic in groundwater, for example.

Dr. Derek Winstanley said that this is a three year study that is only dealing with two (2) priority areas

and utilizing the available resources. He envisions that in the long term there will be a statewide process that will involve water quality, but right now there is not appropriate resources, time, and understanding to include water quality. Dr. Winstanley said that currently there is not a consensus about how naturally occurring arsenic gets into water resources. Water quality is a big issue in Northern Illinois, with naturally occurring radionucleides in the bedrock but again this is not being included at this time due to limited resources.

Ron Armbrust of Manito said that he is interested in the planning process because his livelihood, farming, is dependent on water. His biggest concern is water control or restrictions. He said that the aquifer is unconfined in this area and in Champaign situations are different. Ron Armbrust wanted to make sure this difference was considered. He also asked in what sector the local fish hatchery fell.

Susan Licher responded by saying that she thought that the hatchery was included in the irrigation and sector because the water use at the hatchery is different from most commercial and industrial users. Susan said she would look at the data to find out for sure where the Hatchery's use was included.

Ron Armbrust followed by saying that the Hatchery pumps all year long and does not have the seasonal changes like agriculture and irrigation, so he felt that the hatchery's water use was more closely related to commercial and industrial. Susan Licher stated she would take that into consideration and look more closely at the Hatchery's use.

As a follow up to Mr. Armbrust's comment on how different areas of the aquifer are structurally different, Dr. Derek Winstanley agreed and said that it was certainly wrong to generalize about the whole aquifer. In this area, for instance, there are large pumping rates and we know it is sustainable. This idea cannot be transposed to the eastern part of the aquifer, however.

Jim Nelson of the Soil and Water Conservation District asked if the water demand in one area affected the other side of the aquifer very much, since the areas were so different.

Dr. Derek Winstanley said that for some areas the water use on one side does not impact water availability on the other side. However, there is a very slow westward movement. Unlike the rapid water movement in a river, groundwater movement is only a few feet or tens of feet per year. Over a long period, though, there will be an affect.

Aleda Riviere expressed her concern that water is wasted by farmers. She has seen some irrigation water spraying onto roads rather than the intended fields. She asked if phone numbers could be posted at the end of the irrigation systems so that people could let the farmers know what was occurring.

Ron Armbrust stated that the farmers had been informed that their irrigation systems were not reaching the intended areas.

Mel Pleines, chairman of the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium, said that when people have local concerns it is important that they let people in the committee know. They need citizens to let them know about issues so they can serve them appropriately.

Dr. Derek Winstanley said that planning is important and there is already a lot of planning within communities and industries. Dr. Winstanley related the idea of planning to individuals planning for retirement and that if you do not plan, you will not have enough resources for the future. The same ideas can be applied to water resources and without planning the State may not have enough resources

for the future. It is better to begin planning now, rather than not have enough water in the future.

Susan Licher asked if there were more questions and seeing no more hands said that she would like people to take the packet(s) related to specific interests and fill out and return the questionnaires at the back of the packets by September 1. She thanked everyone for coming, reiterated that everyone needs to use the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee as their voice throughout this water supply planning process and the meeting was adjourned.

ADDENDUM

The local fish hatchery water demand has been moved from the Irrigation sector to the Livestock sector.